



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/834,494	04/13/2001	Andreas Schade	CH919990043US1 (590.041)	3573
35195	7590	06/08/2004	EXAMINER REAGAN, JAMES A	
FERENCE & ASSOCIATES 400 BROAD STREET PITTSBURGH, PA 15143			ART UNIT 3621	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 06/08/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/834,494

Applicant(s)

SCHADE ET AL.

Examiner

James A. Reagan

Art Unit

3621

Nky

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 April 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 4.8.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1. This action is in response to the application filed on 13 April 2001.
2. Priority to EPO 00810327.7 to 14 April 2000 is granted.
3. Claims 1-16 have been examined.

Information Disclosure Statement

4. The Information Disclosure Statements filed on 01 October 2001 (paper #4), and on 24 July 2003 (paper #8), have been considered. Initialed copies of the Form 1449 are enclosed herewith.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
6. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, Applicant's step of transmitting data indicative of the supplier offer to the client device if a match exists does not provide an alternative if a match does not exist. For the purposes of this examination, it will be assumed that if a match does not exist between a buyer and a seller, no action is taken.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 1-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ferstenberg et al. (US 5,873,071 A) in view of Applicant's own admission.

Examiner's note: Examiner has pointed out particular references contained in the prior art of record in the body of this action for the convenience of the Applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply. Applicant, in preparing the response, should consider fully the *entire* reference as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

Claims 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 15, and 16:

With regard to the limitations of:

a) receiving from the client device a client requirement comprising constraint data, indicative of a set of required product features, and at least one updatable feature data

element, indicative of a variable required product feature, which includes address data indicative of a location from which a current specification of the variable feature can be obtained by the trader device in response to an update request from the trader device;

b) comparing the constraint data and the feature data; and

d) determining that a match exists between the client requirement and the supplier offer if said feature data corresponds to said constraint data and said negotiation success condition is satisfied;

- step (b) comprises comparing the constraint data of the client requirement with the feature data of the supplier offer and comparing the constraint data of the supplier offer with the feature data of the client requirement; and*
- in step (d), it is determined that a match exists if said negotiation success condition is satisfied and the feature data of the supplier offer and client requirement corresponds to the constraint data of the client requirement and supplier offer respectively.*

In the background of the specification, Applicant discloses that these limitations as already known in the art (see at least pages 1-3).

Applicant does not specifically disclose *c) repeatedly issuing update requests to obtain current specifications for said updatable feature data elements of the supplier offer and the client requirement and determining whether a negotiation success condition, dependent on said current specifications, is satisfied, until said negotiation success condition or a negotiation termination condition is satisfied*. Ferstenberg, however, in an analogous disclosure directed to electronic negotiations for conducting trade between two parties including a third party intermediary, discloses up-to-the-moment pricing of commodities as well as broadcasting quote feeds i.e. ticker (see at column 44, lines 28-63), updates of offers and counter-offers during the electronic negotiation (see at least column 56, lines 29-33), and optimizing the matching process between a buyer and seller with regard to the parameters set by each (see at least column 2, lines 1-23). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Ferstenberg with the Applicant's own admission because this provides a system in which buyers and sellers may quickly and efficiently be matched together to promote active trade between each.

Claims 3 and 4:

With regard to the limitations of:

- *negotiation success condition is defined by said constraint data, and*

- *negotiation success and termination conditions are predetermined in the trader device.*

In the background of the specification, Applicant discloses that these limitations as already known in the art (see at least page 2, lines 13-18). Ferstenberg also discloses these limitations by disclosing the commodities trading system as shown in the rejections above.

Claim 5:

With regard to the limitation of *performing step (b) prior to performing step (c)*, the combination of Ferstenberg/Applicant discloses the commodities trading system as shown in the rejections above. Applicant/Ferstenberg do not specifically state the order in which the steps are processed. However, Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the commodities trading arts to compare constraint data before conducting a matching buy/sell because this ensures that the buyer and the seller are both agreeable to the terms and conditions of the sale, ensuring a mutually rewarding transaction.

Claim 6:

With regard to the limitation of *when issuing a said update request for at least a second and subsequent current specification for said updatable feature data element of one of the supplier offer and client requirement, the most recent current specification for said updatable feature data element of the other of the supplier offer and client requirement is included in the update request*, Ferstenberg, in column 4,

lines 45-57 discloses storing concurrent and preceding bounds, essentially disclosing a record of the current offers and bids, and an update record of existing and proposed bids and offers for the commodity transaction. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Ferstenberg with the Applicant's own admission because this provides a system in which buyers and sellers may quickly and efficiently be matched together to promote active trade between each, as well as providing a record of transactions and bid/offer histories to protect against abuse of the trading system.

Claim 7:

With regard to the limitations of:

- *(c1) issuing a said update request to obtain a new current specification of said at least one updatable feature data element of one of the supplier offer and client requirement, determining whether the negotiation success condition is satisfied, and if not*
- *(c2) issuing a said update request to obtain a new current specification of said at least one updatable feature data element of the other of supplier offer and client requirement, determining whether the negotiation success condition is satisfied, and if not*

- *(c3) repeating steps (c1) and (c2) until one of the negotiation success condition and the negotiation termination condition is satisfied.*

The combination of Ferstenberg/Applicant implicitly discloses the back and forth process of matching bids to offers during the commodities trading sessions as shown above, as well as successful matches and unsuccessful matches between various suppliers and a client that end either with the termination of the matching process or contract fulfillment.

Claim 8:

With regard to the limitation of *at least one of the supplier offer and client requirement includes a plurality of said updatable feature data elements, and the negotiation success condition is dependent on the current specifications for a subset of the updatable feature data elements of the supplier offer and client requirement, and wherein step (c) is performed only for the updatable feature data elements of said subset*, the combination of Ferstenberg/Applicant discloses trading of commodities, essentially disclosing a variable price and size of the commodity, each of which are typically updated as other buyers and sellers complete transactions, effectively altering the bid/offer for price and size of the commodity.

Claim 9:

With regard to the limitation of *if it is determined in step (d) that a match exists between the supplier offer and the client requirement*,

transmitting data indicative of the supplier offer to the client device, the combination of Ferstenberg/Applicant discloses the commodities trading system as shown in the rejections above. Applicant/Ferstenberg do not specifically state that a message is sent between buyer and seller of possible matches. However, Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the commodities trading arts to compare constraint data before conducting a matching buy/sell and then informing a potential buyer of a seller who matches the criteria set forth by the buyer because this provides the buyer with the opportunity to either go through with the transaction or to neglect the sale as the buyer sees fit.

Claims 13 and 14:

With regard to the limitation of:

- *the supplier device includes said supplier feature updater*
- *the client device includes said client feature update means,*

The combination of Ferstenberg/Applicant discloses the commodities trading system as shown in the rejections above. Applicant/Ferstenberg do not specifically disclose buyer and seller update means. However, Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the commodities trading arts to provide a mechanism wherein buyers and sellers may update their bid and asking process and sizes as they see fit during trading sessions.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **James A. Reagan** whose telephone number is **(703) 306-9131**. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **James Trammell** can be reached at (703) 305-9768.

*Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the **Receptionist** whose telephone number is **(703) 305-3900**.*

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

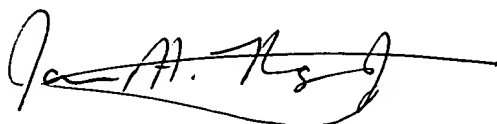
(703) 305-7687 [Official communications; including

After Final communications labeled "Box AF"]

(703) 308-1396 [Informal/Draft communications, labeled
"PROPOSED" or "DRAFT"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5,
2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 7th floor receptionist.

JAR
02 June 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James A. Reagan", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.